

The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5). Applicants have enclosed herewith new drawings that are believed to correct the noted deficiencies in the previously submitted drawings.

In the Claims:

Claims 1, 3, 5-12, 14 and 16-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Salerno et al. (WO 97/09015). Applicants respectfully traverse.

Salerno discloses a sanitary napkin having a stabilizing element in a central region of the napkin. As illustrated in Figure 1, the transverse ends of the stabilizing element have a slightly curved shape thus forming an arcuate bending zone along lines 50.

In contrast, the present claimed invention is directed to a sanitary napkin having opposed longitudinally extending side edges and a longitudinal axis and a preferential bending zone that extends obliquely to the longitudinal axis and which extends from one longitudinal side area to an opposite longitudinal side area of the sanitary napkin. It is respectfully submitted that the cited reference fails to disclose or fairly suggest a sanitary napkin having the above expedients. More particularly, the stabilizing element does not extend obliquely in relation to the longitudinal axis from one longitudinal side area to an opposite longitudinal side area. Applicants have enclosed herewith a definition of "oblique" as provided in The American Heritage College Dictionary, Third Ed. As defined therein, oblique is "situated in a slanting position, not transverse or longitudinal."

The stabilizing element in Salerno, while curved, has a tangent at the longitudinal centerline that is transverse. Accordingly, Salerno fails to teach a preferential bending zone that extends obliquely to the longitudinal axis from one longitudinal side area to an opposite longitudinal side area of the sanitary napkin. That is, at the longitudinal centerline of the Salerno sanitary napkin, the stabilizing element is not oblique. In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the present claimed invention is not anticipated by the cited reference.

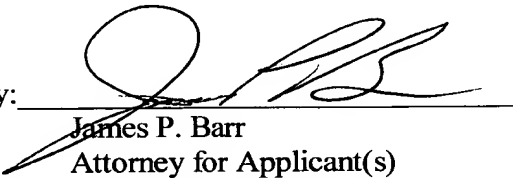
Serial No. 09/375,045

Claims 1-22 are provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1 and 3-18 copending Application No. 09/375,343, over claims 1-14 of copending Application No. 09/374,512, and over claims 1 and 4-19 of copending Application No. 09/477,244. Applicants note that this is a provisional rejection, and will consider filing a terminal disclaimer upon allowance of the copending application which is believed to obviate this provisional rejection.

Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

By: _____


James P. Barr
Attorney for Applicant(s)
Reg. No. 32,882

Johnson & Johnson
One Johnson & Johnson Plaza
New Brunswick, NJ 08933-7003
(732) 524-2826
Dated: July 25, 2001